



Caselton Mine Area and Mill Site Overview

The Multistate Environmental Response Trust (Multistate Trust) is working with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) to investigate and address mine and mill-related contamination in portions of the former Tronox/Kerr-McGee Caselton Mine Area (Site), including the Caselton Mine and Mill Site.

The Multistate Trust

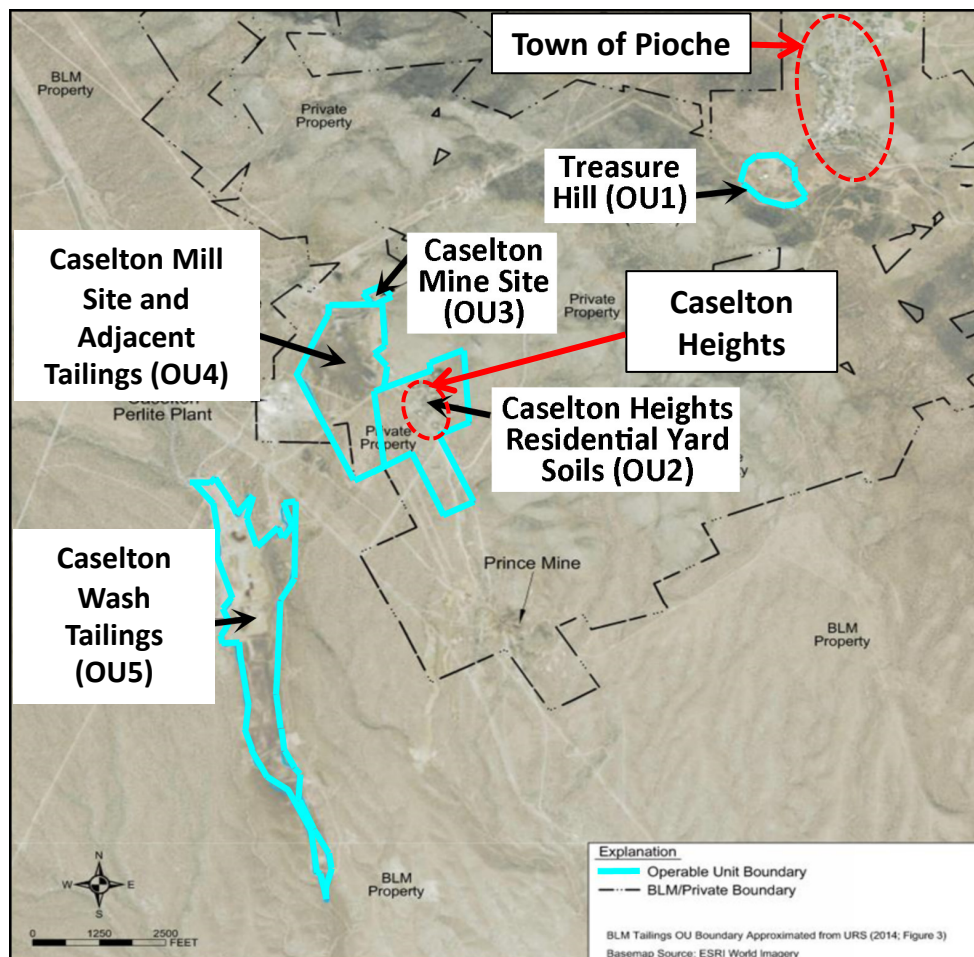
The Multistate Trust is a private, independent trust created as part of the Tronox bankruptcy settlement in 2011 to own, manage, and facilitate safe, beneficial reuse of the Site and hundreds of other sites around the country. Kerr-McGee's and Tronox's patented mining claims (land and mineral rights) that encompassed the Site were transferred to the Multistate Trust in 2011. Since then, the Multistate Trust has worked with NDEP to determine if historic mining and milling materials and waste pose environmental and human health risks, and whether remedial measures can be implemented with limited Site funding.

Operable Units at the Site

To facilitate environmental investigations, the Multistate Trust and NDEP divided portions of the Site into five distinct geographic areas or Operable Units (OUs), based on past mining activities, land use, and potential receptors such as residents, recreators, industrial workers, and ecological receptors.

Background

Located in the Pioche Mining District, the ±3,200-acre area has a long history of silver, gold, lead, zinc, and copper production, beginning in the 1860s. In 1976, the Site was acquired by Kerr-McGee Corp. (Kerr-McGee) (and later Tronox Inc. and its affiliates [Tronox]). Although operations ceased in 1957, aging structures remain throughout the Site, along with legacy mining and milling waste products. The main contaminants of concern are metals, including lead and arsenic.



This map shows the Operable Units (OUs) at the Site outlined in blue.

OU1 – Treasure Hill

OU1 is located in the Town of Pioche, upgradient of homes and businesses, and contains the abandoned Caselton Mine Shaft No. 1. The Multistate Trust conducted investigations at Treasure Hill, including a human health risk assessment and residential yard soil sampling. Sampling results showed soil contaminants, lead and arsenic, above established risk-based cleanup levels. With limited funds, the NDEP and Multistate Trust prioritized removing contaminated soils from residential properties with existing homes along Tank Road, Newark Street, and Ely Street. Approximately 2,300 cubic yards of contaminated soils were excavated from 18 parcels, replaced with clean backfill and restored to original condition. Sampling also identified tailings on a private parcel (Tank Road Parcel) along Tank Road (Tank Road Tailings). In 2022, Lincoln County acquired the Tank Road Parcel to facilitate cleanup.

OU2 – Caselton Heights Residential Yard Soils

OU2 is located in the Caselton Heights subdivision. The Multistate Trust conducted remedial investigations and risk assessments in residential yards and found Site-related soil contaminants to be below risk-based cleanup levels. Therefore, no remedial action was needed. In 2018, the Multistate Trust transferred the land beneath each home to the respective homeowner. The remaining land was transferred to Lincoln County.

OU3 – Caselton Mine

OU3 is the abandoned Caselton Mine Shaft No. 2 and nearby area. The area is secured to deter trespassing and does not require investigation.

OU4 – Caselton Mill Site and Adjacent Tailings

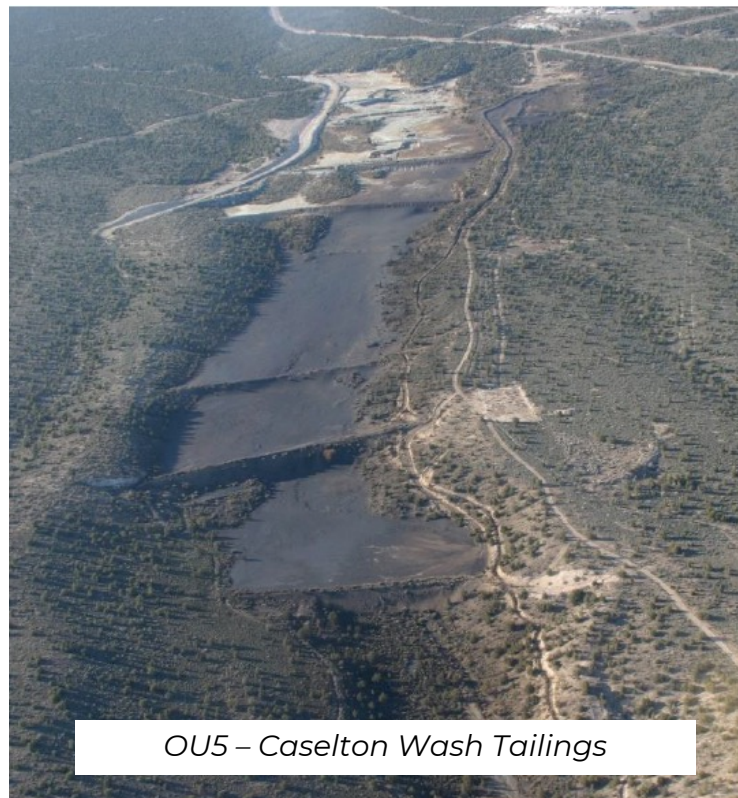
The former Caselton Mill Site and adjacent tailings make up OU4. Remedial investigations showed the former mill site, tailings, and disposal pond sediments contained contaminants from past mining and milling operations. Surface water drains toward the Caselton Wash (located in OU5), and contamination migrates with water runoff, especially during large storm events. An initial assessment of potential remedies to mitigate contaminant discharge and prevent human exposure to the Caselton Mill Site was prepared.

OU5 – Caselton Wash Tailings

OU5 is in the Caselton Wash, an ephemeral stream that held wastewater ponds from milling operations. This non-Multistate Trust owned land is managed by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The ponds contain tailings, and years of rain and flooding have caused the tailings to migrate down the Caselton Wash. The NDEP and Multistate Trust have partnered with the University of Nevada, Reno to collect data to support remedial investigations and evaluate the potential for tailings contamination to leach to groundwater.

What are risk-based cleanup levels?

Risk-based cleanup levels are established limits for contamination based on risks to human health and the environment, and on anticipated future uses of the land (such as residential, recreational, and commercial).



OU5 – Caselton Wash Tailings

Tailings at the Caselton Mine Area and Mill Site

Tailings are a fine-grained byproduct from mining and/or milling operations that can migrate with surface water and move contamination. Stormwater is the primary mechanism for transporting tailings offsite. Tailings have been found in OU1, OU4, and OU5. The Multistate Trust is **prioritizing, evaluating, and addressing the tailings on the Tank Road Parcel in OU1** due to their proximity to residential areas.

In November 2022, the Multistate Trust performed additional investigations on the OU1 Tank Road Tailings. Boreholes were drilled and samples collected to better understand the tailings characteristics and the level of contamination.

Right: OU1. The green boundary shows the approximate area of tailings material on the Tank Road Parcel.

Below: A view of the tailings in OU1 looking east toward Tank Road



Tank Road Tailings Investigation Results (OU1)

- **Depth:** 7.6 feet
- **Volume:** 6,200 cubic yards
- **Average contamination levels**
 - Arsenic: 200 mg/kg
 - Lead: 16,000 mg/kg
- **Maximum contamination levels**
 - Arsenic: 508 mg/kg
 - Lead: 38,000 mg/kg

Results indicated that lead and arsenic are above established risk-based cleanup levels. The Tank Road Tailings are consistent in characteristics and concentrations with OU4 and OU5 tailings, as well as tailings found on other public lands managed by BLM.

Next Steps: OU1

The Multistate Trust is currently evaluating options for addressing the Tank Road Tailings, subject to funding availability. One option would include capping the tailings to eliminate potential for direct human contact. Another option would involve removing and disposing the tailings at an offsite repository managed by BLM. Both options will prevent tailings and contaminant migration onto the adjacent residential parcel and Main Street.

Funding

A major challenge for the Multistate Trust is the limited funding available for Site investigation and cleanup activities. The Multistate Trust, NDEP, BLM, Lincoln County, and other stakeholders are currently working together to leverage other sources of funding.

Next Steps: OU4

The Multistate Trust, NDEP, BLM, and other organizations are supporting Lincoln County with evaluating possible future uses for the Caselton Mill Site and surrounding area. These uses include renewable energy generation, historic preservation, and tourism. An assessment of renewable energy generation and suitability is being performed through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) RE-Powering America's Land Initiative and The Nature Conservancy's Mining the Sun Initiative. EPA is also conducting environmental site assessments at and near the Caselton Mill Site through its Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program.

Next Steps: OU5

BLM has received funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for its "Caselton Mine & Mill and Impacted Watersheds Restoration" project. The funding will be used by BLM to complete a comprehensive remedial investigation and feasibility study to evaluate watershed impacts from OU4 and OU5 contamination.



View of the Caselton Mill Site (OU4) looking north toward the Caselton Mine (OU3)

For more information, please contact us

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Visit the NDEP webpage at <https://ndep.nv.gov/land/abandoned-mine-lands/caselton-mine>

The Trustee of the Multistate Trust is Greenfield Environmental Multistate Trust LLC. Visit MultistateTrust.org. The Multistate Trust plans to launch a website for the Caselton Mine Area, including the Caselton Mine and Mill Site, later in 2023.

